

## The Rapture of the Church

John 14: 1-3

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.”

1 Thes 4:13-18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”

1 Cor 15:51

“Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

There is some teaching that the church will be raptured at the last trumpet in Revelation. That trumpet is a trumpet for judgement, not a trumpet that calls for repentance.

*Paul wrote 1 Corinthians between 53 and 54 AD*

1. In 1st Corinthians Paul is writing about the last trumpet in relationship with the feast of trumpets.
2. The feast trumpets was the 5th feast also known as Rosh Hashanah.
3. The feast of trumpets was a call for all Jews to come and repent of the sins they had committed in the prior years.
4. When the last trumpet sounded the High priest would go into the Holy of Holies and make atonement on the mercy seat for the sins of the people committed in the previous year.
5. A rope would be around his leg in case He had any unconfessed sin in himself. If He did have unconfessed sin he would die in the Holy of Holies and they would have to drag Him out using the rope.
6. *John Wrote the book of Revelation 96 AD*
7. *The 7 trumpets John is talking about are 7 judgements sounded upon an unrepentant people. Not on believers who have repented.*

The requirement of the high priest was to do this every single year.  
The is called the feast of Yom Kippur.

Just for our information the 7th and final feast is the feast of tabernacles. It is representative of the 1,000 year reign.

The writer of Hebrews tell us that we don't need a high priest to go into the Holy of Holies anymore because Jesus our High priest paid our sin debt in full at calvary.

Heb 9:11,12

'But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things having come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all time, having obtained eternal redemption.

Heb 9:27 & 28 "And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

the writer of Hebrews is correct in saying that everyone is destined to die once and after that comes judgment . However Paul told the Corinthians that if you are alive (AND IN CHRIST) when the rapture takes place you won't die. We who are alive at the rapture will fulfill a mystery from God. **We won't die.** We will be changed into our new heavenly bodies in an instant.

And at that moment Jesus comes to bring salvation to those who are eagerly awaiting for Him. We will not be going through the tribulation.

Tonight I want to talk about what the Bible has to say about the Rapture of the church.

As Evangelist Tiff Shuttlesworth always says,

We will start in the Bible,

WE will stay in the Bible and

We will finish in the Bible.

We will look at the 5 aspects of the Rapture of the church.

1. What is the rapture of the church?
2. When will the rapture take place?
3. Who will go in the rapture?
4. How will the rapture take place?
5. What signs point to the rapture?

The Bible tells us of a coming event called the rapture of the church.

It is a prophetic event (in other words, God spoke of this event before it will take place) Remember from this mornings teaching we found out that 28 percent of all scripture is prophecy.

And prophecy is history written before it takes place..

1. What is the rapture of the church?

a. Someone once said that the word rapture is not in the Bible.

That is true.

Neither is the word Bible in the Bible. You won't find the word grandparent in the Bible either.

However, the concept or meaning is there.

Our English translations say caught up.

b. If the word rapture is not in the Bible then why do we use it?

It is because the Greek word is different than the Latin word, and the Latin word is different than the English word, however they all have the same meaning. The translators use the word that they were translating to.

Jerome translated the new testament into Italian from the original manuscripts of Greek.

c. The New testament was written primarily in Greek and Aramaic.

d. The Greek word in the original text is HARPAZO, meaning to seize upon suddenly, to catch away.

The word HARPOZO is the same verb used in the following scriptures.

Rev 12:5 "Snatched up to God in heaven"

2 Cor 12:2,4 where Paul was Caught up into the 3rd heaven

Acts 8:9 where Philip is suddenly taken away.

John 10:12 Wolf seizing the sheep

Math 13:19 Evil one snatching away the word

Acts 23:10 Roman soldier snatching away Paul from the mob.

The word involves the idea of a powerful sudden "snatching away"

When Jerome translated the Greek word Harpazo to make the Latin Vulgate he used the word that had the same meaning as the Greek. That word is *RAPIEMUR*. *Rapiemur translated into English means "caught UP"*

e. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 1 Thess 4:17, that with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God that Jesus would

descend from Heaven (3rd heaven) to the clouds in the 2nd Heaven, that we will be “caught up” or “raptured” in an instant.

f. Have there been other “raptures” in the Bible? Yes, ;but they were on an individual basis; Enoch walked with God and he was no more for God took him.

That is why I believe that Enoch will be one of the 2 witnesses in the tribulation.

We just read in Hebrews where it says “it is appointed unto man to once die and then the judgement.

Enoch didn’t die and neither did Elijah. Some bible scholars believe that the 2 witnesses will be Moses and Elijah because they were on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus.

The truth is WE don’t know, AND it doesn’t matter to us since we will be in heaven when these 2 prophets appear on earth anyway.

The 2nd one that was raptured and that was Elijah. He was caught up in a chariot of fire to heaven.

Another was Paul where he described in 2 Cor 12:2 that he was caught up into the 3rd heaven.

In Acts 8:39 Philip was caught up and transported to Azotus after he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.

G. When the rapture takes place it will happen so suddenly that if you have not made Jesus your Lord and savior you will not have time to repent and you will find yourself heading into the most horrific time the earth will ever experience.

The prophet Joel says that in the last days “your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. I know which group I

fall into because several years ago I had a dream that I was in a shop like we own and I was in the very last bay when I dreamed I heard a very loud trumpet blast and I was being taken up and I tried to reach down and grab someone but it happened so fast I couldn't catch anyone.

So many people believe that they can continue living their lives the way they want; they will keep on sinning and living with the attitude "I can do whatever I want" and then when the trumpet sounds I will get saved.

They will be shocked when they find themselves in a place reserved for the devil and his demons because they thought they had plenty of time.

1. Scripture states that if you miss the rapture you will not be able to repent because you rejected the messiah and God will send you a strong delusion.

2 Thess 2:10-12

"He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they **refuse** to love and **accept the truth** that would save them. So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will **believe these lies**. Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth."

### **Q 1 "what is the rapture of the church?"**

1. It is the sudden snatching away from the earth and taking to heaven all those who are IN CHRIST, both dead and alive.

1 Thess 4:15-17

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up

together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord”

The rapture of the church is not the second coming of Christ.

The best way to put it into perspective is to look at them like 2 bookends. The Rapture is the left bookend where Jesus comes in the air to GET His church, and the 2nd coming is the right bookend where Jesus returns to earth WITH HIS church to set up His millennial kingdom.

That bears repeating .....

IN the rapture Jesus comes **for** His church

In the second coming Jesus comes **with** His church.

These are 2 distinct and separate supernatural events.

## **Q 2 When will the rapture take place?**

That is a good question that is probably on every Christians mind. Or it should be.

The best way to answer that question is to look at the example Jesus gave in Math 25:1-13 of the 5 wise virgins and the 5 foolish virgins.

Jesus taught in parables. What is a parable?

A parable is a short simple story that teaches or explains an idea, especially a moral or religious idea. (Cambridge)



A parable also makes a comparison between a seemingly unrelated story and a deeper lesson.

Jesus uses the parable of the 10 virgins because it is similar to the Jewish wedding custom of the day.

He compares the custom of the groom coming and taking his bride to his father's house to Jesus coming for his bride (the church) to heaven through the rapture.

What was the Jewish wedding custom of that time like?

Tell of the custom.

By knowing the wedding custom that we have a better understanding of what the rapture will be like, because we are seeing the whole picture in light of the Jewish wedding custom.

1. Jesus came to this earth and proposed to us (He called us to come unto Him and to Him only. There is no other name where which we must be saved than the name of Jesus.
2. Jesus' proposal came with a promise. That He would return but like the Jewish groom he gave the best gift to remind us and to keep focused on Him and His promises, that gift is the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us that in John chapters 14, 15, and 16 "I'm going to the Father but I will send the comforter to you."
3. The groom returns to the Father to prepare the bridal chamber.

"John 14: 1-3

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have

told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.”

4. As the virgins where waiting for her groom to return they all became drowsy, but when the call went out that the bridegroom was coming, the wise virgins were ready.

a. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:8 “And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.” Ask yourself, Am I looking and longing for Jesus to come and rapture me home?

5. When the Father says “go get your bride” Jesus comes and snatches us away to heaven just like the Jewish groom would snatch away his bride.

6. Rewards for believers at the Judgement seat of Christ.

7. The wedding supper of the Lamb (in heaven at the end of the 7 years of tribulation on the earth) Some people say the the marriage supper will take place on earth. Whether in heaven or on the earth it doesn’t matter to me. I let the angels set the table and clean up.

8. Jesus triumphantly returns to earth along with His bride to set up His kingdom.

It is important to note that the groom did not determine when he could go and get his bride, only the Father could tell when the bridal chamber was ready, so only the Father could dispatch his son to get his bride.

We see the parallel to that custom in Mathew 24:36 where Jesus himself says that “but of the day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

Jesus knew exactly how to explain the rapture by using that parable of the Jewish Groom coming to get His bride..

You and I cannot imagine how wonderful heaven will be. Several years ago I had a young man work for me. He was 46 years old but he had only been saved for 6 years.

He was a great christian young man. He led 6 of my men to the Lord. Because his wife had a serious heart condition they were going to have to move to Tampa where there were 5 doctors who could treat her condition.

Before he left, he came into my office and questioned me about what heaven would be like.

I told him, Joe, when we think about In the story of creation found in the book of Genesis we see that everything was created in 6 days . Then Jesus tells us that He is going away to prepare a place for us that where He is there we will be also, AND Jesus has been working on it for 2,000 years, I said JOE, the Bible says, “eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him. WE cannot fathom how beautiful heaven will be.

CAN YOU SAY ALLELUIA, PRAISE THE LORD.

We are still on the 2nd question of the timing of the rapture.

There are some people who would want you to believe that the rapture will happen at the end of the tribulation and there are other people who believe the rapture will happen halfway through the tribulation.

Sadly those theories do not match with scripture.

I've given you a hand out that puts all 3 views with the scriptures and only the pre-tribulation view follows scripture.

1. We believe the Bible. And the evidence in the Bible tells us that the rapture will take place a minimum of 7 years before the end of tribulation.

Here are more scriptures that prove the church will not go through the 7 years of Tribulation.

1. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are representative of 7 real churches and they also represent the church age. Of which we are still living in. Chapter 4 John is told to come up here, I must show you what will take place AFTER these things ( the church age)

I would urge you to get a copy of the book "the unveiling" by Rev Ed Rimer. He goes into great detail about the 7 churches.

2. The church (greek Ecclessia) is mentioned 19 times in the first 3 chapters of Revelation. It is not mentioned one single time in chapters 6-19. We don't see Ecclessia or church is mentioned again until we get to Revelation. Chapter 19. Where it tells us of the wedding of the Lamb to His bride. Remember the bride and the groom are together for 7 days in the jewish wedding before the wedding supper. The church will be in heaven 7 years before the wedding supper of the lamb.

3. Rev 3:10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" The English word **from** here is the Greek word "**Ek**" meaning **FROM** (NOT THROUGH). John didn't use the Greek word "**DIA**" . That word means across or passing through" The church will not be going or passing through any part of the tribulation.
4. Underline Revelation chapter 1 verse 19. This gives a time line of revelation. . "“Write down what you **have seen**—both the things that **are now** happening and the things that **will happen**. In other words John is told to write about 3 distinct time events. (1) what you have seen (2) the things that are happening now (church age) (3) what will be. Everything after the church age.
5. Dr Richard Mayhue comments on John 16:33 "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." The trials and sorrows now are not globally. They are ethnicistic and done by man. The church has experienced trials but nothing like what is described on Rev 6-19. The tribulation mentioned in is world wide and it is the wrath of God and not man inflicted.
6. Paul said in 1 Thess that he didn't want us to be ignorant or untaught about the rapture.
7. Noah's ark was a type of the rapture. Noah preached for 100 plus years urging people to turn to God and flee their sins. That is what the church has been doing since the church started 2000 years ago. But when the door was shut it was too late. When the rapture takes place it

will be too late. Those left are destined for judgement and the tribulation.

8. God doesn't judge the righteous and the wicked together. There are 2 judgements coming. (1) is the judgement seat of Christ which will immediately follow the Rapture. It is conducted in heaven and it is our works that will be judged. Listen to 2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad." The 2nd judgement is at the Great White Throne Judgement where all who have rejected Christ and His blood will be judged by Jesus and they will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.
9. Next God's love tells us Romans 8:1 "Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus."
10. Rev 5:10 states that the church doesn't go through the tribulation because Jesus purchased us for the purpose of ruling and reigning with Him. "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased people for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation."
11. You have made them into a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."
12. Jesus comes as the preserver, deliverer, or rescuer from the coming wrath.

A. Listen to 1 Thess 1:10 "And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment."

13. Here are some more scriptural truths that we will **not** go through the tribulation.

- a. 1 Thess 5:9-11 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you also are doing." Another translation says "from the WRATH to come."
- b. Philippians 3:21 "He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control."

14. **2 Thess 2:3** "No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction," **2 Thess 2:7,8** "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is removed. Then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will eliminate with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

### **Q 3 Who will go in the Rapture?**

1. The dead in Christ (**IN CHRIST**) ( **UNDERLINE THAT VERSE**). It will not be those who just attend a church. Don't believe those false teachers who say that God wouldn't send anyone to hell because he loves everyone. Yes, God loves everyone, but He doesn't want you to perish, but that all should repent ( **2 Peter 3:9**) that is why He sent only begotten son. God wants us to go to heaven but we must recognize our sin, confess our sin to Jesus and turn from our sin. (come out from among them and be



separate says the Lord) and make Jesus the Lord of your life. It is the unconfessed sin that will keep you from heaven.

2. We which are alive and **IN CHRIST** when comes in the air.

3. The one requirement for both the living and the dead is to be **IN CHRIST**. We are in the world but we are not to be part of the world. WE must be all in with Christ. In relationship with Jesus and faithfulness to Jesus.

Tiff Shuttlesworth says the **RAPTURE** “ is the true separation of church and state.

#### **Q 4 How will the Rapture take place.**

1. In the twinkling of an eye. A study was done on the “twinkling of an eye and the results of the study determined that the twinkling of an eye was 1/12,000th of a second.

2. You must be ready when the trumpet sounds. If not, you won't have time to repent.

Math 24:42,44,& 50

42: ““So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming.”

44:”You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected. NO SIGN WILL BE GIVEN

50:”The master will return unannounced and unexpected,  
3 times we are told to be constantly watching for Jesus. He is coming back for those who are looking and long for His appearing.

Luke 12:35 tells us to. Be “dressed for service and keep your lamps burning.

The lifestyle we are to lead is found in another passage of Luke.



Chapter 21:34 ““Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, like a trap”

### **Q 5 What signs point to the rapture of the church?**

1. NONE. There is not one single sign that has to happen before the trumpet sound and the church is gone.

Dr Stanley Horton in his book “our Destiny” biblical teachings on the last things, says,

“in other words , there will be no prior warning and no opportunity to get ready at the last minute”

End time prophecies point to the last days leading up to and including the tribulation, the millennial kingdom, the great white throne judgement and the new heaven and the new earth and finally eternity with God.

But the rapture is a **SIGNLESS event**. What did we read in Mathew 24:36?

“However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.”

Only God knows when the rapture will take place.

Praise God because He loves us so much He does tell us what the last days will be like.

Mathew 24:37

“When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. People didn’t realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.

“Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left.

“So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.

1. The people in Noah’s day were just like people are today.
  - a. Doing their own thing
  - b. Going about life excluding God
  - c. Partying, marrying, eating, like nothing was going to happen.
2. The Bible is even more specific of what the days of Noah we like  
Genesis 6:11-13

“Now God saw that the earth had become **corrupt** and was filled with **violence**. God observed all this **corruption** in the world, for everyone on earth was **corrupt**. So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with **violence**. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!

I’m not being political but when we look around and when we see All of the corruption and violence and lawlessness going in the world today it should be a wake-up call for us to get our houses in order, JESUS IS COMING FOR HIS BRIDE.

3. God tells us to be ready at all times

Mathew 24:44

“You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”

Right now we are watching PROPHECIES pointing to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

If we are this close to the rebuilding of the 3rd temple in Jerusalem,

If we are this close to the one world government with a one world leader and a one world economy, then how close are we to the Rapture.

Jesus said in Mathew 24:32-34

““Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is very near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things take place.’

Israel is the fig tree Jesus is referring to here. Look at what is happening now in Israel regarding these times.

1. The Sanhedrin is been re-established
2. The Menorah is ready
3. All of the 96 instruments for animal sacrifice are ready
4. The red heifer is ready
5. The tabernacle is ready
6. The temple can be rebuilt and up and running in 6 months
7. The Kohanim (the members of the jewish priesthood) .The priests are being trained for temple service as we speak.

If we are this close to the tribulation and all of these end times prophecies are being fulfilled.....

## **HOW MUCH CLOSER ARE WE TO THE RAPTURE OF THE THE CHURCH?**

**2 Peter 3:9**

God does not want anyone to be destroyed (perish) which means to face judgement for unreported sin, **BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTENCE.**

Are you ready to meet Jesus?

If the triumphet would sound would you be taken up?

God knows your heart and he knows if you are ready,

Don't wait. Now is the time of salvation,

**Alter call**